United Nations A/70/269

General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 August 2015

Original: English

Seventieth session
Item 20 (b) of the provisional agenda*
Sustainable development

Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/15 on the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, as well as in its resolution 69/217, called for continued support to small island developing States in their efforts to implement national sustainable development strategies and programmes by incorporating the priorities and activities of small island developing States into relevant strategic and programmatic frameworks, and for the full and effective implementation of the commitments and partnerships announced at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. The Assembly, in its resolution 69/217, also called for the initial findings of the review and the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit on United Nations system support for small island developing States to be included in the regular report of the Secretary-General.

The objective of the present report is to provide, for the consideration of Member States, an update on the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, including the partnerships announced at the Conference, as well as the initial findings of the review of the Joint Inspection Unit.

* A/70/150.

15-12602 (E) 240815

Please recycle

I. Introduction

1. The third International Conference on Small Island Developing States was held in Apia from 1 to 4 September 2014, on the theme "Sustainable development of small island developing States through genuine and durable partnership". The Conference adopted the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (resolution 69/15, annex) as its outcome document.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/217 on the follow-up to and implementation of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, recalled the sustainable development priorities for small island developing States and stressed the need to ensure the effective implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the Samoa Pathway.

3. In the same resolution, the General Assembly called upon the United Nations system, international and regional financial institutions and other multilateral development partners to continue to support small island developing States in their efforts to implement national sustainable development strategies and programmes by incorporating the priorities and activities of small island developing States into their relevant strategic and programmatic frameworks, including through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework process, at both the national and regional levels, in line with their mandates and overall priorities, and urged the full and effective implementation of the commitments and partnerships announced at the Conference and the fulfilment of the provisions on all means of implementation, as contained in the Samoa Pathway.

4. Resolution 69/217 was the first resolution adopted following the holding of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and the adoption of its report (A/CONF.223/10), and in follow-up to the decisions of the Conference.

5. The present report outlines the progress made towards furthering the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, in accordance with resolution 69/217. Relevant bodies of the United Nations system, including regional commissions, as well as regional intergovernmental organizations of small island developing States, major groups and Member States, were consulted in its preparation.[1]

[1] Inputs were received from the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the United Nations Capital Development Fund, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, the Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs of the Secretariat, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation, the International Trade Centre, the International Telecommunication Union, the World Meteorological Organization, the Joint Inspection Unit, the Commonwealth, the Global Environment Facility, the International Renewable Energy Agency, the World Bank and the Governments of Australia, Cuba, Italy, Japan, Mauritius, Monaco and New Zealand.

II. Implementation, monitoring and follow-up of the Samoa Pathway

Integration into national and regional policies and development and cooperation frameworks, programmes and activities, and support to national sustainable development strategies and programmes

A. Updates from the United Nations system and partner agencies

6. The implementation of the Samoa Pathway has become an important element in the strategic plans, work programmes and investment of the organizations of the United Nations system and of regional and global intergovernmental organizations. The organizations are aligning their planned and ongoing activities with the implementation of the Samoa Pathway and various partnerships launched at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States.

7. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs ("ECESA plus") will monitor implementation within the United Nations system, ensuring integrated follow-up to the Conference. Linkages are being made with the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the post-2015 development agenda. The Inter-Agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States, composed of both United Nations and non-United Nations system agencies active on issues relating to small island developing States, has been revitalized to play a role in monitoring and fostering partnerships where members are involved. It brainstorms on issues of common interest, in addition to mobilizing inputs and exchanging information.

8. The Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat has created the SIDS Action Platform (www.sids2014.org), which, among others, hosts the United Nations implementation matrix for the Samoa Pathway, an outline of the key action paragraphs of the Pathway, and is the United Nations entity serving as focal point for both.

9. In addition, many international and regional intergovernmental organizations have held follow-up consultations with their constituencies at the national, regional and global levels to determine how best to follow up on the priorities expressed in the Samoa Pathway.

10. United Nations organizations, non-United Nations entities and development partners are undertaking Samoa Pathway follow-up, action-oriented initiatives within their areas of competence in support of the small island developing States.

Cross-cutting activities

11. Since the International Conference was held, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has undertaken a series of actions to consider how the Samoa Pathway can be mainstreamed in its work and how Governments can be supported in integrating and implementing the Pathway at the national level. UNDP work is country-driven, which is achieved at the national level primarily through consultation between United Nations country teams and partner countries to align activities through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework.

12. As an example, the UNDP multi-country office based in Samoa has integrated the Samoa Pathway into its programmatic framework (UNDP subregional programme). Follow-up on the Samoa Pathway, under Expanded communication and partnerships as a response to the Samoa Pathway, is one of its priorities for 2015. Examples of its activities include the development of communications and joint outreach initiatives and events focused on the Samoa Pathway, the Millennium Development Goals/sustainable development goals and/or the vulnerability/exclusion indicators; the implementation and analysis of a partnership survey; and the establishment of innovative alliances.

13. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is working on a wide range of issues in small island developing States, including disaster risk reduction, nutrition, water and sanitation, and health and non-communicable diseases. However, strong emphasis is placed on child mortality, maternal mortality, adolescent pregnancy, HIV/AIDS, the implementation of social protection systems, gender equality and women's empowerment, with an emphasis on the issues of violence against girls, adolescent pregnancy, and girls' education and social development. UNICEF also contributes to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway in the areas of climate change, water sanitation and hygiene, education and youth.

14. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is in the process of developing a UNESCO action plan for small island developing States. That forward-looking document responds to part V, paragraph 1 (e), of UNESCO General Conference resolution 1 adopted by the Conference at its thirty-seventh session. In that resolution, the Conference invited the Director General of UNESCO to develop an action plan for implementing the outcome of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States in the areas relevant to the UNESCO mandate. For example, through a series of workshops in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, UNESCO has been working with educators and trainers to enable them to develop hands-on Education for Sustainable Development programmes, with the proactive "measure, analyse, share and take action" approach.

15. In addition, the UNESCO initiative Global Priority Youth: Strengthening Youth Development in the Caribbean aims to ensure that young women and men are engaged in policies and programmes affecting them and lead action to promote peace and sustainable development in their countries and communities, while a Melanesian workshop on the fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects was held in Port Vila in July 2015 to review progress since the previous Pacific workshop held in Fiji in 2001, and was aimed at the preservation of culture and heritage.

16. In addition to the broad mandates of the above-mentioned agencies, other institutions focused on specific themes of the Samoa Pathway, examples of which are set out below.

Economic growth

17. The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) is engaged in partnership initiatives with the private sector, including: expansion of the value chain development partnership, Inclusive and Sustainable Industrial Development, through the twinning of technical cooperation, South-South and triangular, and multilateral cooperation; and experience sharing planned for small island developing States in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans on industry-driven development of agro-industries and agribusiness value chain development. Together with SIDS

DOCK[2] members and regional organizations, UNIDO is involved in the establishment of the Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres for Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean, Pacific, Indian Ocean and Africa.

18. The United Nations Capital Development Fund, through the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme, aims to add 1 million Pacific islanders to the formal financial sector by 2019 by spearheading policy and regulatory initiatives, facilitating access to appropriate financial services and delivery channels and strengthening financial competencies and consumer empowerment.

19. The World Bank is seeking to become more agile and flexible in responding to small States' evolving needs and has undertaken a variety of actions to support small States in several areas. Under the Road Sector Support Project in Cabo Verde, the asset value of the national road network has been increased by around 15 per cent to more than CVE 600 billion; and the Kiribati Adaptation Programme is supporting the country in adapting to the effects of climate change, improving water security and coastal resilience.

20. In recognition of the problems faced by small island developing States, the World Bank has allowed them some access to concessional funds despite the fact that many are middle-income countries. This allows small island developing States to obtain access to regular International Development Association (IDA) credit terms, which results in longer maturities, grace periods and lower interest rates. World Bank support for small States amounts to close to $3 billion, rising by $700 million in financial year 2014. The World Bank has also undertaken several programmes to deal with emergency situations arising from natural disasters, such as the IDA Crisis Response Window, as well as insurance schemes, such as the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility. Those are complemented by technical and advisory solutions. In addition, the International Finance Corporation has a number of industry-specific advisory initiatives in small island developing States to promote growth and job creation, for instance improving the investment climate for tuna in Solomon Islands, visa reform in Sao Tome. and investment zones in Trinidad.

21. In the Caribbean, the World Bank has two initiatives: the Comprehensive Growth and Debt Framework, for debt relief, and the Caribbean Growth Forum, for promoting sustainable and inclusive growth. The Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility is the insurance pillar. In the Pacific, programmes have been launched to improve communications, fisheries and disaster risk management. Cooperation with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the Asian Development Bank, the European Union, Japan and the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery has led to the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative, an insurance model. In Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean and the South China Sea, the World Bank runs the South-West Indian Ocean Risk Assessment and Financing Initiative for insurance against disasters, the South-West Indian Ocean Fisheries Governance and Shared Growth Programme for sustainable fisheries and the ASPIRE programme to attract investment in renewable energy.

22. The South-South Technology Transfer Facility for the Small Island Developing States was co-launched by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and

[2] SIDS DOCK is an initiative by the member countries of the Alliance of Small Island States to provide a collective institutional mechanism to transform the energy sectors of small island developing States in order to help them generate financial resources to address climate change.

the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States during the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. An on-site business-matching space was hosted, in which 48 enterprises from 15 countries were mobilized; a South-South Global Assets and Technology Exchange regional centre in the Asia-Pacific region was established with the signing of a memorandum of understanding with the Pacific Island Private Sector Organization; and an additional South-South Global Assets and Technology Exchange country centre was established through an agreement signed with the Samoa Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Trade

23. The International Trade Centre (ITC) has fully incorporated the priorities of small island developing States into its programme of work by mainstreaming the implementation of the Samoa Pathway. Its strategic plan for 2015-2017, developed in close collaboration with stakeholders from small island developing States, sets out the approach and priorities in providing trade-integrated solutions that correspond closely to the Samoa Pathway priority areas.

24. The strategic plan sets out six key focus areas: trade and market intelligence for small and medium-sized enterprise competitiveness; supporting regional economic integration and South-South links; connecting to value chains: small and medium-sized enterprise competitiveness, diversification and links to export markets; strengthening trade and investment support institutions; promoting and mainstreaming inclusive and green trade; and building a conducive business environment. ITC contributes to the implementation of actions in the small island developing States in the areas of sustained and sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth; tourism sector; gender equality and women's empowerment; and trade.

Data and statistics

25. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs is addressing the data and statistics needs of small island developing States, particularly for the post-2015 development agenda, and began vulnerability-resilience country profiling in eight pilot countries through a United Nations Development Account project, in cooperation with UNDP and regional organizations. It is also facilitating ongoing research collaboration among the University Consortium of Small Island States.

26. UNDP country offices supported 50 per cent of small island developing States in enhancing data and analysis, monitoring and evaluation, and use of evidence capacities.

Oceans

27. The Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea of the Office of Legal Affairs established funds for the purpose of facilitating the preparation of submissions to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf,[3] as well as to assist States parties in the implementation of the Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea of 10 December 1982 relating to the Conservation and Management of Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish, in accordance with Part VII of the Agreement.

[3] See www.un.org/Depts/los/clcs_new/trust_fund_article76.htm.

The Division also carries out a variety of technical assistance activities targeting small island developing States through, for example, the fellowship programme of the United Nations and the Nippon Foundation. The fellowship supports education and research in disciplines including ocean affairs and the law of the sea to government officials and other mid-level professionals from developing countries.[4]

28. The Pacific Islands Forum secretariat is focusing on promoting the Pacific Ocean Alliance, which was launched in Samoa, through policy and technical consultations.

29. The Pacific Ocean Alliance, facilitated by its commissioner, is a new partnership that was launched at the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States. The Alliance is an open-ended and voluntary information-sharing and coordination partnership between stakeholders with an interest in the sustainable development, management and conservation of the Pacific Ocean and its resources.

Climate change

30. As part of its contribution to the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), on behalf of all its partners, launched a new partnership for strengthening weather and climate services in small island developing States in the Caribbean, the South Pacific, the Indian Ocean and other regions. WMO focuses on investing in specific activities to maintain and restore existing weather and climate observation stations, train local staff in the maintenance, calibration and repair of such equipment, and build the capacity of national meteorological services to archive, analyse and report on current weather and climate data so as to promote better planning decisions at the national and regional levels.

31. The Global Environment Facility continues to support numerous projects that align with the objectives of the Samoa Pathway. The Global Environment Facility model catalyses funding from other institutions and has fostered and will continue to foster the types of genuine and durable partnerships called for in Samoa. The Facility has allocated, for the period 2014-2018, more than $256 million for projects in the small island developing States that protect the global environment while promoting sustainable development. Those resources are available to small island developing States in accordance with the Facility's procedures and in line with the principles of the Samoa Pathway. The Facility has worked closely with UNDP.

32. The Commonwealth secretariat is in the process of developing a full proposal for a Commonwealth climate finance skills hub and response mechanism. Building upon the successful "hub and spokes for trade" model, the skills hub will feature a network of regional and national technical advisers for obtaining access to climate finance. The advisers will help to build the capacity of small island developing States to prepare proposals, comply with eligibility criteria and develop effective long-term responses to climate change. There will be a highly networked research management function based in Mauritius that will facilitate South-South exchange and support the advisers.

33. The climate finance skills hub will be closely aligned with the Green Climate Fund, and consultations are ongoing between the Fund and the Commonwealth secretariat at a technical level. Furthermore, the hub will work closely with regional

[4] See www.un.org/Depts/los/nippon/index.

organizations, national Governments and organizations working in climate finance readiness.

34. The Caribbean subregional office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean is complementing the work of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Climate Change Centre in strengthening resilience at the national and subregional levels to the impacts of climate change and mitigating against them.

Disaster risk reduction

35. The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction notes that priorities with regard to small island developing States were featured in the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. Building on the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters, States adopted the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 on 18 March 2015 at the Conference, held in Sendai, Japan. The Framework sets a renewed global agenda on disaster risk reduction in the context of sustainable development. It recognizes the specific challenges that small island developing States face and the need for special attention and particular support through the implementation of the Samoa Pathway in the area of disaster risk reduction.

36. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supported and co-facilitated a workshop for further training of personnel conducted by the CARICOM Disaster Relief Unit on the Minimum Initial Service Package for Reproductive Health for Barbados, Guyana and six Eastern Caribbean countries. The objective of the workshop was to encourage the trainers to expand the Package, as well as advocate and support the inclusion of sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence in national disaster planning and response plans. Regional partners also included the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency. Advisory guidance was also provided to five countries and areas (Barbados, Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and Sint Maarten) for the development of their humanitarian response plans and contingency and business continuity plans during emergencies.

Energy

37. The International Renewable Energy Agency has developed the SIDS Lighthouses Initiative to support the strategic deployment of renewable energy in small island developing States, bring clarity to policymakers regarding the steps required and enable targeted action. As a joint effort of small island developing States and development partners, the Initiative will assist in transforming the energy systems of small island developing States through the establishment of enabling conditions for a renewable energy-based future, by moving away from developing projects in isolation to a holistic approach that considers all relevant elements spanning policy and market frameworks, technology options and capacity-building.

38. The Network of Regional Sustainable Energy Centres for Small Island Developing States was launched at the Vienna Energy Forum in 2015. The Network involves SIDS DOCK, UNIDO, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, CARICOM and the Austrian Development Cooperation; the Clinton Foundation was a partner during the preparatory process. The centres are the Caribbean Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency and the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency; the third, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, based in

Cabo Verde, was launched in September 2014. The centres will lead to cooperation between small island developing States in the area of sustainable energy by increasing regional knowledge management, policy and capacity development, and investment and business promotion. The event also featured the signing of the statute of SIDS DOCK. It also highlighted the role of mainstreaming gender in the policies of small island developing States through the establishment of the Island Women Sustainable Energy and Climate Resilience Network, which focuses on sustainable energy and climate resilience as one of the first flagship programmes of the centres. It also called for more representation of small island developing States in major United Nations reports on women.

Health

39. In the Caribbean, UNFPA assisted countries in leveraging financial resources, acquiring state-of-the-art tools and training health-care professionals to improve universal access for all populations. Those investments have resulted in advancements in the integration of sexual and reproductive health and HIV programmes.

40. UNFPA also provided technical and financial support to the ministries of health and non-governmental organization partners in the Caribbean in order to enhance their capacity to provide integrated reproductive health services and training on contraceptive technology.

41. UNFPA supports the review and update of nursing and medical school training curriculums in order to incorporate sexual and reproductive health matters associated with non-communicable diseases in the Caribbean.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

42. The UNFPA multi-country programme for 2013-2017 provides the avenue to partner with national counterparts in addressing gender-based violence at the policy formulation, service delivery and community mobilization levels. The multi-country programme and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the Pacific also allows for the implementation of programmes that seek to assist national counterparts in mainstreaming a gender perspective into policy formulation.

43. UNFPA facilitates the objective of gender equality in the Pacific by collaborating with Pacific ministries of health, ministries of women's affairs, universities and civil society organizations. As a result of such partnerships, small island developing States in the Pacific have achieved greater gender equality by opening more channels for women to decision-making at the household, community and national levels and through strengthened protection systems that respond to and prevent violence against women, children and other vulnerable groups.

Partnership framework

44. The General Assembly, in its resolution 69/217, reaffirmed paragraph 101 of the Samoa Pathway, in which Heads of State and Government had requested the Secretary-General, in consultation with Member States, to present recommendations for a partnership framework to monitor and ensure the full implementation of pledges and commitments through partnerships for small island developing States. As part of that process, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs sought the views of all Member States through a survey sent to the permanent missions. Responses to that

survey were received from 73 Member States, as well as from the Alliance of Small Island States and the European Union. As a result of those consultations, an informal note by the Secretariat on a partnership framework was prepared and posted on the SIDS Action Platform. The recommendations contained in that note are as follows:

(a) Recommendation 1: form an informal group, or "Friends of Small Island Developing States", to support follow-up to existing partnerships for small island developing States and promote and advocate the launch of new ones. The group could benefit from having a mix of Member States as members and could invite United Nations entities, international and regional organizations, major groups and other stakeholders to contribute to the meetings as appropriate. The group should be co-chaired by the Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States and a non-small island developing State on a rotational basis. The group should work in close collaboration with the Secretariat and its relevant departments to effectively undertake its activities. The Secretariat should, in its supporting role, provide technical assistance, inform the group on various aspects of its work and provide substantive and analytical support on partnerships for small island developing States;

(b) Recommendation 2: organize, on an annual basis, an action-oriented, results-focused, informal multi-stakeholder partnership dialogue as a half- or full-day event, within existing resources, at the margins of the meetings of the high-level political forum on sustainable development under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council. The partnership dialogue should provide opportunities for reviewing progress and sharing good practices, lessons learned and challenges encountered from partnerships for small island developing States, in particular those launched in Samoa, and encouraging the launch of new partnerships in small island developing States. It would also review reports from regional and national partnership dialogues (see below). The partnership dialogue should focus on the "on-the-ground" impact of those partnerships, taking into account the priorities outlined in the Samoa Pathway and the post-2015 development agenda;

(c) Recommendation 3: organize regional multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues through existing forums, notably the regional commissions in Asia and the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa, in close collaboration with small island developing States and partners. Regional dialogues should review partnerships in a given region, provide policy recommendations and develop regional progress reports, to be presented at the partnership dialogue under the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

(d) Recommendation 4: encourage the organization of national multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues, possibly in conjunction with existing development planning exercises or respective donor consultations, which provide a platform for partners to discuss best practices and challenges relating to national realities. National multi-stakeholder partnership dialogues should be voluntary and driven by national needs, priorities and circumstances. Small island developing States should strongly encourage partnerships in their country to report on the progress of partnerships to those dialogues as a means to maintain national ownership while tracking progress at the national level. National dialogues could produce national progress reports, which could be presented at the regional level or at the global partnership dialogues. The national reports must take into account existing reporting requirements, so as not to increase the reporting burden on Member States;

(e) Recommendation 5: develop a standardized reporting mechanism for partnership progress reports. A common reporting structure should be developed in order to minimize the reporting burden, achieve reporting coherence and be able to perform analytical studies on partnerships and their progress, both at the level of individual partnerships and at the regional and national levels. The use of existing reporting mechanisms and reports of the Secretary-General should be leveraged to the full extent possible;

(f) Recommendation 6: continue to maintain and further develop the SIDS Action Platform to ensure its simplicity and relevance to the process, while keeping it open to new registrations of specific partnerships, and decentralize its content management to allow different types of focal points (at the individual partner, national and regional levels) to report on the progress of partnerships directly in the SIDS Action Platform.

Partnership dialogue

45. In follow-up to the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, an informal partnership dialogue was organized by the Permanent Mission of Maldives to the United Nations and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on 25 June 2015 in New York. The meeting provided an opportunity for all partners to update stakeholders on the progress of their ongoing partnerships in small island developing States and included an interactive discussion on the proposed recommendations for a partnership framework.

46. At the meeting, Member States stressed the importance of paragraph 101 of the Samoa Pathway in developing a robust partnership framework as an important mechanism for follow-up to partnerships for small island developing States, as well as for the framework to emphasize the action and impact of those partnerships.

47. Participants underlined that no partnership should be left behind and urged the Secretariat to work in a coordinated manner through constructive collaboration between different departments and units dealing with issues pertinent to small island developing States.

International Year of Small Island Developing States

48. The International Year of Small Island Developing States was launched in February 2014 and successfully concluded in February 2015, with respective ceremonies held under the auspices of the General Assembly.

49. The International Year aimed to raise global awareness of the sustainable development challenges faced by small island developing States, as well as to celebrate their rich cultural and natural heritage. The Alliance of Small Island States appointed three Champions for the International Year, who helped to mobilize stakeholders and partners at the national, regional and international levels to initiate numerous art, music, dance and other cultural activities and photo, art and literature exhibits and use videos and other media to feature both everyday life in small island developing States and how various external shocks affected them.

50. The world community also focused on issues concerning small island developing States during the International Days of Biodiversity and Oceans and the World Environment Days. Most of all, the International Year of Small Island Developing States contributed in building momentum for the third International Conference on

Small Island Developing States. The closing ceremony included a panel on the theme "SIDS issues as global issues: situating SIDS in the post-2015 development agenda", thus making the link to the ongoing negotiations and processes.

B. Updates from Member States

51. In keeping with the themes of the outcome of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, Member States have also actively sought to implement the Samoa Pathway within the areas of priority for small island developing States. Within the areas of focus, the activities below were among those that have been implemented since the adoption of the Samoa Pathway.

Economic growth

52. Italy intends to finance a pilot project aimed at improving public-private dialogue so as to strengthen the agritourism clusters and value chains in the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.

53. The Official Development Assistance Charter of Japan is now called the Development Cooperation Charter. It recognizes the particular vulnerabilities of small island developing States, especially with regard to climate change, and recommends development assistance based on individual development needs and bearing in mind the uniqueness of each State. It recommends strategies based on partnerships, institutional strengthening and improved public education and awareness campaigns.

Sustainable energy

54. Italy is in the process of promoting an extension of the scope of the activities to be financed under the terms of the memorandum of understanding governing the partnership between the small island developing States in the Pacific and Austria, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain, which was launched in 2007 with the purpose of implementing a climate change and sustainable energy programme, and in 2015 allocated a new grant to the "Managing the ecosystem and livelihood implications of energy policies in the Pacific island States" programme with the aim of carrying out new projects in the renewable energy sector.

Oceans and seas

55. Monaco is pursuing initiatives towards the preservation of biodiversity, as well as oceans and seas, with a view to developing partnerships with small island developing States in the implementation of the Samoa Pathway. Two successful projects involve the restoration of mangroves in Haiti and Samoa.

Food security and nutrition

56. Australia is assisting small island developing States in two priority themes of the Samoa Pathway. With respect to fisheries, assistance provided by Australia in the Pacific is delivered principally through long-standing regional partnerships with the Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (AUD 40 million, 2015-2018). Australia is also supporting the Pacific Oceanscape initiative, the Coral Triangle Initiative on Coral Reefs, Fisheries and Food Security, combating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, the Pacific

Ocean Pollution Prevention Programme and regional workshops on the Convention on Biological Diversity.

57. In October 2015, Italy plans to host, with technical support from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, a stocktaking event in Milan in connection with Expo 2015 on the theme "Feeding the planet, energy for life". The conference will provide a unique opportunity to assess the progress made by small island developing States and donors, monitor commitments made in the Samoa Pathway and connect them to the global debate on food security and nutrition.

Gender equality and women's empowerment

58. Australia is enhancing the political, economic and social opportunities for women in the Pacific through Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development, a 10-year programme (2012-2022) with a cost of AUD 320 million. Australia supports improved political, economic and social opportunities for Pacific women in 14 Pacific Islands Forum countries.

Data and statistics

59. New Zealand provides support to initiatives that deal with data and statistics, institutional support for small island developing States, and monitoring and accountability.

Partnerships

60. Australia is involved in numerous partnerships for small island developing States, including: Carnival Australia partnership; Westpac partnership; ANZ partnership; Pacific Private Sector Development Initiative; International Finance Corporation Pacific partnership; Women and Trade: Economic Empowerment of Women in the Pacific; Women's Economic Empowerment Driving Sustainable Development in Small Island Developing States; Pacific Facility IV; Pacific-Australia Climate Change Science and Adaptation Planning programme; International Coral Reef Initiative; and Climate and Oceans Support Programme in the Pacific.

61. Japan has been convening conferences at the summit and ministerial levels to support partnerships between Japan and small island developing States in three regions: the Pacific, the Caribbean and Africa.

62. In May 2015, the Pacific region conference was held in Fukushima, where leaders discussed a wide range of possible cooperation over the next three years with a focus on disaster risk reduction; climate change; environment; people-to-people exchanges; sustainable development; oceans, maritime issues and fisheries; and trade, investment and tourism. More than ¥55 billion was committed to human resource development and people-to-people exchanges in the next three years. At the end of the summit, the Fukushima Iwaki Declaration was adopted.

63. At the conference for CARICOM in 2014, multiple high-level talks were held to drastically increase cooperation between Japan and small island developing States in the Caribbean. The country's policy concerning CARICOM was announced as consisting of three pillars, the first of which is cooperation towards sustainable development, including overcoming vulnerabilities particular to small island developing States.

64. The fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development, held in 2013, issued two outcome documents: the Yokohama Declaration 2013, which presents a future direction for African development, and the Yokohama Action Plan 2013-2017, a road map of specific measures that will be taken under the Tokyo International Conference process over the coming five years on the basis of the Yokohama Declaration 2013. The package includes assistance with disaster risk reduction in African island countries, including such projects as the installation of a climate radar system, anti-landslide measures, coastal protection in Mauritius and coastal erosion and flood management in Seychelles.

III. Priorities of small island developing States in the wider United Nations development framework

Post-2015 development agenda

65. The outcomes under the post-2015 development agenda, which will be adopted in September 2015 by world leaders, will consist of a political declaration; sustainable development goals and targets, based on the report of the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals; and financing for development and means of implementation.

66. The Samoa Pathway contains the priorities of small island developing States for consideration in the discussions on the post-2015 development agenda. With regard to financing for development, small island developing States have called for the explicit articulation of pertinent issues relating to debt sustainability, to ensure a smooth transition with respect to graduating from least developed country status and meeting the requirements to be outlined in the sustainable development goals, and capacity-building in terms of implementation of programmes and limitations to raising domestic private finance.

Activities

Cabo Verde

67. Cabo Verde, the Comoros, Mauritius, Sao Tome and Principe and Seychelles met in Praia, in partnership with the United Nations, to discuss the best strategy for those countries to achieve sustainable development within the framework of the post-2015 agenda. The conference produced the Praia Declaration, which focused on the sustainable development goals. In the Declaration, the conference recognized the critical role that citizens, parliaments, civil society and business can play in driving sustainable development and tracking progress. Countries are committed to promoting equality in societies and in developing the capacity of institutions to collect disaggregated data in order to inform policy choices and monitor progress across all sections of society.

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

68. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean held a meeting in New York to discuss the transition of the region to the post-2015 development agenda. It was felt that the region faced a host of problems, primarily relating to a lack of economic growth, inequality, poverty, poor infrastructure, and environmental

and natural disaster issues, and that there was a need for a broad-based development agenda based on the greater role of markets, technology and sustainability.

69. At the event, it was acknowledged that the region was composed mostly of middle-income countries, which brought specific financing challenges. There was hope that official development assistance would remain significant, given that it was important to approach the post-2015 process through a multisectoral lens and by working on cross-cutting issues. South-South cooperation would be crucial, and there should also be support from major agencies of the United Nations.

70. There was a need for a new paradigm for development that fostered well-being but was cognizant of the limited resources and avoided excessive duplication due to multiple mandates.

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

71. At the seventy-first session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, held in May 2015, member States adopted resolution 71/4 on the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

72. In terms of monitoring and follow-up, the Commission, while continuing to provide support for statistical capacity development, launched a new Development Account project with which it will assist with the development and mainstreaming of the indicators for the sustainable development goals and, by extension, the Samoa Pathway.

United Nations Population Fund

73. In April 2015, UNFPA convened a dialogue on the post-2015 development agenda with 11 Pacific island countries to inform them of intergovernmental processes and engagement in the context of country priorities and regional commitments, including in the Moana Declaration and the Samoa Pathway. The dialogue concluded with country aspirations to complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals and the full implementation of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014.

Major United Nations conferences and processes

74. Small island developing States were featured prominently in activities at the Third United Nations World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Sendai from 14 to 18 March 2015. In the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, the outcome document adopted at the Conference, it was recognized that small island developing States needed special attention and support to augment domestic resources and capabilities through bilateral and multilateral channels.

75. In addition, a side event on the theme "Building effective partnerships towards resilient small island developing States in the post-2015 world" was held during the Conference. That event was viewed as an opportunity for stakeholders to engage directly with leaders of small island developing States with the common purpose of strengthening the resilience of those States to respond to the challenges posed by disasters.

76. During the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July 2015, a side event was held with a focus on small island

developing States. That event, on the theme "Small island developing States: meeting the challenge of post-2015 financing" also helped stakeholders to address the financial constraints that small island developing States faced in financing sustainable development.

High-level political forum on sustainable development

77. On 1 July 2015, the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened the segment on small island developing States under the theme "The Samoa Pathway: translating vision to action". The panel included presentations from Member States, the private sector, academia, international agencies and major groups and addressed areas relating to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway, including financing, capacity-building and resilience strengthening. Samoa also provided an update on the impact of the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States and implementation activities.

78. Noting the need to close the gap between commitments and action on the ground, participants overwhelmingly agreed that the high-level political forum had an important role to play in reviewing the overall implementation of the Samoa Pathway, including within the context of the post-2015 agenda and the sustainable development goals, the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the climate agreement to be adopted in Paris, at the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. A clear signal was sent to replace rhetoric with action. Mention was made of the need for a supplementary regional review mechanism to engage stakeholders at the regional level and review action taken at the regional and national levels.

79. Key challenges for small island developing States emphasized in the dialogue included the need for enabling inclusive economic growth through adequate and predictable financing (in particular for infrastructure projects), a small economic base due to remoteness, land scarcity and vulnerability, and a focus on generating youth employment and reducing underemployment overall. Climate change remained a key concern for small island developing States, with climate impacts not only having environmental and societal consequences but also becoming a matter of national security in some cases. The need to enhance gender equality and the empowerment of women and youth was highlighted in civil society interventions.

IV. Conclusion

80. In the transition to the post-2015 development agenda, small island developing States have carefully outlined their priorities through the Samoa Pathway and during the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda and the sustainable development goals. The international community has provided considerable support to small island developing States and has remained committed to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway.

81. It is expected that the activities relating to the implementation of the Samoa Pathway will continue during the seventieth session of the General Assembly, particularly as the Joint Inspection Unit will issue its report on United Nations system support to small island developing States (see annex).

Annex

Summary of the Joint Inspection Unit's contribution to identifying parameters to support the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway

I. Background

1. On 19 December 2014, the General Assembly, in paragraph 12 of its resolution 69/217, requested the Joint Inspection Unit to make recommendations in order to facilitate the work of the Assembly at its sixty-ninth session in determining the parameters of a comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States to foster the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway.

2. In response to that mandate, the Joint Inspection Unit included in its programme of work for 2015 the report entitled "Recommendations to the General Assembly of the United Nations for the determination of parameters for a comprehensive review of United Nations System support for small island developing States" (see A/69/921). That report, which was delivered within the deadline, contains substantive findings and six recommendations.

II. Developments

3. On 8 June 2015, the General Assembly, in its resolution 69/288, took note with appreciation of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit and requested the Unit, on the basis of the recommendations and findings outlined in its report, to conduct a comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States (para. 2). The Assembly also requested the Unit, taking into account the limited time frame available to present its initial findings, to begin, as soon as possible, its review in relation to recommendations 2, 3 and 4 of its report (para. 4).

4. At its session held from 24 to 26 June, the Unit decided to include the report entitled "Comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States: initial findings" in its ongoing programme of work for 2015, in response to paragraph 4 of resolution 69/288. The new project will be implemented within existing resources but will affect the execution of the Unit's budget for 2015, since resources have been already allocated to other projects for the year.

5. The report will address, as a matter of priority, the issues relating to:

- Evaluation of current allocation of resources at United Nations Headquarters, focusing on the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, to assess the commensurability of resources and mandates given to them to support the sustainable development of small island developing States
- Assessing existing programmatic coordination within the United Nations among relevant entities of the Secretariat, such as the regional commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

- Assessment of the role of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group on Small Island Developing States and identification of measures to strengthen its effectiveness in fostering the implementation of the Samoa Pathway

6. The comprehensive review as mandated in resolution 69/288 has been included in the roster for the programme of work for 2016, from which inspectors will select topics for the programme of work. Whether the comprehensive review can be undertaken as from the beginning of 2016 depends on the availability of additional (extrabudgetary) resources, since it will require extensive field work and consultancies to cover most of the different issues relating to small island developing States.

7. The Joint Inspection Unit will do its utmost to deliver the first report in a timely manner, counting on the collaboration of the entities and inter-agency mechanisms concerned with recommendations 2, 3 and 4 under the United Nations Secretariat, such as the regional commissions, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Inter-Agency Consultative Group.

III. Expected outcome

8. The results of the project "Comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States: initial findings" will be shared, as soon as possible, with key stakeholders, possibly by the end of 2015 or early in 2016, bearing in mind that the Unit should seek the inputs of all small island developing States, development partners and institutional actors within and outside the United Nations system.